



# **LRD WATER SAFETY BOAT PATROL MANUAL**

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## **Section 1.0 Background and Purpose**

### **1.1 Background**

- a) The Corps of Engineers' early involvement in water safety is not clearly documented, but we do know the Corps partnered with other agencies concerned with water safety as far back as the early 1950's. Larger divisions, such as LRD, SAD, and SWD were among the first to put together comprehensive plans to decrease public fatalities and accidents. Corps safety experts were among the founding fathers of the National Water Safety Congress more than 50 years ago in Nashville, TN.

It was during the mid-1970's when the Chief of Engineers noted that nearly 500 lives had been lost at Corps lakes and waterways in a single year. Recognizing that more effort was needed to improve public safety in Corps areas, he issued the first official directive for the Corps to amplify its water safety efforts.

- b) On 15 September 2006, Chief of Engineers LTG Strock issued a memorandum establishing new objectives to reduce recreation-related public fatalities by 40% by the end of FY08. For LRD, this marked the beginning of a sustained campaign to significantly increase water safety related boat patrols. Shortly thereafter, over 40 new patrol boats had been purchased and now LRD routinely conducts 1200 to 1500 boat patrols each year.



## 1.2 Purpose/Need for Standards

- a) Recurring questions and comments have indicated that a reference guide would be useful in assisting Park Rangers for consistency and training purposes:
- *What are we expected to do while performing boat patrol?*
  - *I never received training on how to perform boat patrol during my Visitor Assistance or Motorboat Operator classes.*
  - *Are we expected to do enforcement while on the water or only education?*
  - *Do we enforce state regulations, Title 36, or Coast Guard regulations?*
  - *Do we have checklists for what to look for during a vessel inspection?*
  - *So, if I find a violation on the water what should I do about it? What is my role?*
  - *Can I use volunteers to assist me on boat patrol?*
  - *We just bought a new patrol boat, but are not sure how it should be marked.*
  - *There are just too many violations occurring for my Park Rangers to address all of them, so I have them ignore certain violations.*
  - *What does it mean to terminate a voyage?*
- b) The purpose of this manual is to provide guidance for boat patrols within LRD so that patrols are conducted with consistency, in accordance with Corps' Visitor Assistance regulations, and within command expectations. Nothing in this manual is intended to contradict or expand the guidance provided in ER/EP 1130-2-550.

- c) In situations where this manual is silent on an issue or appears to contradict the ER or EP, those regulations are controlling. Further, nothing in this manual is intended to expand the roles of a Park Ranger as identified in ER 1130-2-550:



*“The protection of facilities or the enforcement of rules shall always be secondary to the safety of Corps personnel, contract employees and visitors. Operations project managers and park rangers shall strive to be visible to the public, primarily to help and assist them, and secondarily, to enforce 36 CFR Chapter III, Part 327 (Title 36). In no case shall this enforcement portray an aggressive law enforcement image.”*

- d) Per ER 385-1-9, Employees who operate USACE boats/vessels will do so in a safe and prudent manner and in accordance with recognized Federal, state, and local laws and standards.

## **Section 2.0 Patrol Boat Selection and Markings**

### **2.1 Patrol Vessel Selection**

- a) Not all vessels are appropriate for conducting Visitor Assistance (VA) patrols. Typically, projects have multiple vessels for conducting a wide variety of work, including visitor assistance, buoy maintenance, permit inspection, natural resource management, clean-up activities, etc. Routine VA boat patrols should only be conducted in a vessel that projects professionalism and visual presence. Visual Presence identifies the operator as a Park Ranger and the vessel as a Corps of Engineers Vessel. Visual Presence is the first and lowest level of enforcement and is dependent on appropriate markings and identification.
- b) Park Ranger and visitor safety is the highest priority when selecting a patrol vessel. An ideal patrol vessel is heavy duty/commercial grade, with a 4-stroke engine, and equipped with a center console that is operated from a “stand-up” position, captain’s chair, or other type helm chair designed to reduce fatigue on the operator. This type of vessel affords the operator and assistant with maximum visibility and movement.

c) Pontoon or jon boat style vessels should not be used for routine patrols, absent exigent circumstances, as these do not convey a professional image of enforcement. Paddlecraft (kayaks and canoes) operations are addressed separately in Appendix C.

Furthermore, such vessels are not designed to operate in areas of heavy traffic or times of excessive wind and wave action.

## 2.2 Markings for Patrol Vessels



a) Visitor Assistance vessels shall be marked in such a manner to be readily identified by the public. The Corps communication mark and signature block will be mounted on the bow (front) end of the boat, and PARK

RANGER or RANGER will be mounted starting amidships (center) towards the stern (back) on both sides.

b) Should a district or project use specific alpha numeric identifiers for vessels, these shall be mounted near the stern on both sides. In no case will any markings be placed on vessels in addition to those noted above. Examples of markings not permitted would be “Wear-It” decals, Bobber the Water Safety Dog stencils, US flags, or other markings. Uniformly marked vessels promote professionalism, allow the public to easily identify Park Rangers, and enhance the effectiveness of Visual Presence.

c) PARK RANGER and RANGER lettering shall be black block capitals and will contrast with the hull. Lettering may be painted or stenciled and in most cases will be significantly larger in proportion to all other vessel markings to increase visibility on the water. It is understood that variability in hull types and configurations will result in marking variations between vessels.

## 2.3 Appropriate Emergency Lights for Patrol Vessels

a) Emergency lights are required for all patrol vessels. As opposed to vehicle emergency lights, vessel emergency lights shall be placed in a conspicuous location to facilitate visitor and park ranger safety. In accordance with EP 1130-2-550, lights and sirens are to facilitate visitor assistance not for pursuing violators of Title 36.



b) Overhead light bars or mast mounted lights using a flashing

or oscillating motion are authorized. Emergency lights on USACE vessels are typically blue. However, it is necessary to know and be in compliance with state and local regulations for emergency lights on public assistance vessels.



## **Section 3.0 Patrol Vessel Equipment**

### **3.1 LRD Required Equipment for Patrol Vessels**

In addition to any state and federal requirements (except for registration and licensing), the following equipment is required on USACE patrol vessels:

- Type IV ring buoy or life ring with at least 90' of 3/8" solid braid polypropylene line/rope attached
- One portable or permanent overboard ladder of sufficient length to allow a person to self-rescue by boarding the ladder from the water
- One, 1.A:10-B:C fire extinguisher (rather than USCG or state required B-1)
- Type 3, 16 unit first aid kit and one pocket mouth piece or CPR barrier
- Type III, Type V or better USCG approved, International Orange PFD with reflective material visible when deployed and equipped with a USCG approved automatically activated light that must be worn at all times
- USCG compliant Running Lights and Signal Device (horn or whistle)
- Fenders/Bumpers
- Kill switch (must be worn by operator at all times)

- Capacity plate
- PA system (portable or fixed) and Two way radio or cell phone (with reception) – ensure all appropriate channels programmed in radio
- Siren (to facilitate visitor and park ranger safety IAW state and local regulations)
- Emergency Blue Light (to facilitate visitor and ranger safety)
- Spotlight
- Tow Rig/Rope
- Rescue throw bags
- Anchor
- Digital Camera, Binoculars, Knife, and Flashlight
- Warning and Citation Books along with writing instruments
- 1 Required Day/Night Time Visual Distress Signal
- Method of retrieval for incapacitated victims i.e. (Sling, rescue net, backboard)
- Oars, Pike Pole, Extra PFDs for loaners (including Type IV)
- State/USCG boating guide, Title 36, and Lake Maps

### 3.2 Recommended Equipment

The following items are ***STRONGLY*** recommended for USACE patrol boats:

- Jumper cables and/or battery pack
- Spare drain plugs and engine oil if needed
- Potable Water, sun screen, snacks, sun glasses, etc.
- Blanket (emergency foil type is space saving)
- Light Sticks and Flares
- Toolkit/Go Bag (items such as flashlight, pens, knife, extra batteries, mirror, spark plug wrench, emergency blanket, matches, etc.)
- Rearview Mirror
- Small handheld buoy to mark on water locations (drowning, etc.)
- Trauma Kit with tourniquet
- Watertight plastic bin for educational items
- LRD Vessel Safety Inspection Checklist

### 3.3 A Clean and Safe Boat



Keeping your patrol boat clean and uncluttered helps avoid workspace accidents including trips, falls, cuts, and scrapes. It does not take much for an accident to happen in a cluttered and confined workspace. Ropes laying on the deck and drink bottles rolling around are recipes for accidents.

- Keep all tools and equipment in proper storage places when not in use.
- Keep traffic areas such as aisles free and clear. Do not allow objects such as ropes to cross traffic areas. These create unnecessary tripping hazards.
- Keep emergency equipment in good condition. Do not allow anything to block access to fire extinguishers and first aid equipment.
- Maintain equipment
  - Untangle ropes
  - Keep moisture away from spare PFDs
- Close storage cabinets. Accidents can occur when someone trips on an open door or contents of a cabinet fall out.
- Clean up spills immediately
  - Gas/oil spills
  - Drink spills
- Keep chemicals in properly labeled containers and know where to find the safety data sheet for any chemical onboard.
  - Bug Spray
  - Oil
  - Ethanol treatment
  - Window wash for driving console window
  - Boat wash
- Keep trash and debris containers secured so as not to blow out while underway.
- Wash and maintain the Patrol boat. A Patrol boat free of mud, and spider webs portrays a professional image. Windshields should be cleaned of smudges and bugs.
- Report and repair any broken or malfunctioning equipment.
- Never store heavy objects in an overhead location.
- Do not smoke (including vaping) or use tobacco products on the boat.

## **Section 4.0 Roles of a Park Ranger on Boat Patrol**

### **4.1 Purpose of Boat Patrols**

Simply put, Park Rangers conduct water safety boat patrols to save lives. Over the last ten years LRD has averaged 30 water-related deaths each year. Nationally, the Corps experiences nearly 150 fatalities yearly.



### **4.2 Effectiveness of Boat Patrols**

Park Rangers in LRD spend over 10,000 hours each year on the water, patrolling approximately 80 lakes and rivers. Since 2006 we have closely tracked those instances where park rangers have assisted boaters and swimmers. It is not uncommon for LRD park rangers to assist as many as 300 distressed boaters and swimmers in a year. Even more noteworthy is that annually 1 to 5 of those that were helped were in such distress, that had it not been for the fact that our park rangers were there to assist they would have likely died. These actions taken by park rangers are the basis for the LRD Star of Life Award.

### **4.3 Roles of a Park Ranger on the Water:**

a) **RESCUE/ASSIST**: The primary role of a park ranger while conducting boat patrol is to assist the visitor. There is clear evidence, as noted in 4.2, that boat patrols provide assistance to distressed boaters and swimmers, even to the point of saving lives. Being present on or near the water is essential to provide this assistance.

- Towing – Refer the visiting public to a towing service whenever possible. This service is available at most marinas for their slip customers, and to others for a nominal charge. However, if there is an immediate threat to life or property and if equipment, skill level, and environmental conditions allow for a safe tow the Park Ranger may choose to tow the stranded vessel to the nearest safe harbor. Assisting a disabled boater can be an excellent opportunity to educate the public, while at the same time projecting a positive image of the Corps.

b) **ENFORCEMENT OF WATER SAFETY RULES & REGULATIONS**:

Water Safety Enforcement should be viewed as “PREVENTION”. Similar to the role

of Rescue/Assist, enforcement of water safety rules and regulations are an immediately tangible benefit of park rangers conducting boat patrols. In recent years, LRD has logged over 5,000 verbal and written enforcement actions. A significant number of enforcement actions taken by park rangers while on boat patrol result in changing visitor behavior, that if not corrected, could/would result in injury or death. Some enforcement actions involve “in-progress” violations that are immediately impacting visitor safety, while some actions provide for the long term safety of visitors. While enforcing water safety rules and regulations, Park Rangers shall avoid an aggressive law enforcement appearance.

c) **EDUCATION:** This is the cornerstone of the Corps’ Water Safety Program. Education is a long term effort that builds upon itself with results that may not be immediate. Although education is not the primary purpose of a boat patrol, it can and should be worked into every contact while on patrol. Keep in mind that the primary purpose of a boat patrol is NOT to “meet and greet”, it is to assist visitors and potentially save lives. However, interactions with visitors should incorporate education and friendly advice as appropriate.

#### **4.4 Role of the Supervisor:**

The primary role of a supervisor in regards to boat patrol is to adequately train, prepare, and encourage Park Rangers. This includes ensuring all Park Rangers and other operators are licensed in accordance with ER-385-1-91. In addition to being properly licensed, supervisors shall routinely work with their Park Ranger staff to encourage them to develop the skills and confidence necessary to adequately perform boat patrol duties.

### **Section 5.0 Boat Patrol Basics**

#### **5.1 Ranger Uniform and Appearance**

a) Park Rangers must, as instructed in Visitor Assistance Tactical Communication Training, “BE GOOD, LOOK GOOD, SOUND GOOD, or it is NO GOOD”. The public not only watches the Park Ranger’s boat operational skills, but they also look at the Park Ranger’s appearance and make judgments based upon what they see. Park Rangers must wear the approved duty uniform for daily wear while on boat patrol. Options exist for special use uniform items such as polo shirts, ball caps, shorts, etc. Time spent on the water will provide experience as to which uniform items will provide the best balance of compliance, comfort, and appearance.

b) Uniforms must be clean. Shirts shall remain tucked, with gig lines straight, and blackened belts and shoes. Park Rangers shall not “kick back” with feet propped up on gunwales or consoles. Park Rangers shall have good posture and no gaudy jewelry

exposed. Sunglasses (non-mirrored and polarized) are encouraged. However, removing sunglasses periodically during visitor engagement is encouraged to foster improved communications.

## 5.2 Cooperation with other Patrol Agencies

a) It is in the best interest of USACE to foster relationships with other federal, state, and local agencies. These agencies often have common goals with respect to public safety on or near the water of our projects.

b) Formal and informal contacts should be made with these partners to enhance visitor assistance. It is recommended to have open lines of communication to include knowledge of scheduling, equipment, jurisdictions, authority, routines, communications, etc. This sharing of experience and expertise allows for improved efficiency and

effectiveness of the mutual resources being allocated to the water safety mission. It is important to keep in mind that it is NOT the responsibility of other agencies to enforce Title 36, but the sole responsibility of USACE Park Rangers.



c) It has been found to be advantageous for USACE Park Rangers to occasionally patrol with partner agencies. Cooperative patrols help in developing good interagency relationships, mutual understanding of roles, and improved park ranger safety; however, this will not be normal procedure and will be done only with specific approval of the operations or resource manager. Managers should monitor cooperative patrols so that park rangers have a firm foundation on their roles and responsibilities as USACE Park Rangers and within Visitor Assistance regulations.

## 5.3 Best Time to Be on the Water

a) LRD fatality records indicate the majority of fatalities occur between May and September, on weekends and holidays, and during the afternoon and evening hours. These time periods are also when projects experience peak visitation.

b) Boat patrols should be concentrated during periods of peak visitation in order to increase their effectiveness in reducing water-related fatalities. In addition, managers and supervisors should be flexible in schedule development to allow for boat patrols that extend beyond late afternoon and into evening hours, as needed.

c) Patrols that extend into the low light hours of the evening, for the purposes of engaging boaters with no running lights, can be a necessary part of boat patrols. Regular boat patrols that extend well into dark are not authorized. However, there are instances (boating events, fireworks displays, etc.) when special non-recurring night patrols may be necessary and encouraged, with appropriate communication and planning.

d) Specific situations may warrant regular patrols during non-peak times depending on visitation patterns, coverage by other agencies, and local areas of emphasis.

#### **5.4 Where to Patrol on the Lake**

a) All lakes and waterways are different and time spent on the water will provide insight into the most beneficial areas to patrol.

b) Areas on the water that are heavily utilized and congested are good places to start. These would include, but not be limited to, boat ramps, popular undesignated swimming areas, party coves, narrow navigation channels, crowded no wake zones, and busy open water boating areas. Other areas which are critical to patrol would include, but not be limited to, marinas, restricted areas around beaches, bridges, fishing piers, and cliffs.

- No wake areas and coves near popular boat ramps tend to be a great place for new park rangers to gain on the water experience and communication skills necessary to perform boat patrols. These areas offer an efficient way for the park ranger to perform vessel safety inspections, incorporate water safety messages, and assist visitors with any questions or concerns they may have.

#### **5.5 Who is the “Lead” Park Ranger?**

Boat patrols consisting of two park rangers are preferred whenever possible. When conducting boat patrols with multiple park rangers, it is important to know who is going to be the “lead” or “on-point”. This is the park ranger who will establish and maintain communications with individuals outside of the patrol boat. This duty should be conducted by the park ranger with the best communication skills, and on the water experience. However, each LRD park ranger should develop the skills to perform this and all other tasks necessary while on boat patrol. Having a “lead” allows for simple communication between vessels and can assist in getting the visitors underway faster and back to a quality recreation experience. It also allows other park ranger(s) on

board to focus on duties to assist the lead park ranger, including line handling and keeping an eye on surrounding swimmers and/or nearby boats.

## **5.6 Engaging Visitors Who are *in or near* the Water**

a) For non-vessel on the water engagement, boat patrol efforts should focus on individuals around, near, or in the water. These could be visitors who are swimming, wading, cliff jumping, etc. The risk of fatalities from these activities are as great or greater than boating. Park Rangers should be looking for any violations that could impair the safety of any individual.

b) Park Rangers must exercise extreme care and caution in operating the patrol boat around individuals in the water. The operator must be aware at all times of where the prop is located in relation to individuals, and whether or not the motor is in gear or in neutral. Some situations will demand shutting off the motor to ensure safety of those individuals in the water. However, the operator must be cognizant of wind patterns that may cause the vessel to drift into visitors in the water, especially when the vessel is no longer under power. Park Rangers must also be cautious when exiting the location and make sure all is clear before starting the motor and putting it back into gear.

## **5.7 Engaging Vessels on the water**

a) For engagement of vessels on the water, boat patrol efforts should be focused on any act or conduct which could impair the safety of any individual. Violations to look for include, but are not limited to, no wake violations, careless/negligent/reckless operation, PFD requirements, restricted areas, lighting requirements, etc.

b) Once a determination is made to approach a vessel on the water, the Park Ranger should determine the best location to come alongside the vessel. For example, a no wake zone would be preferred over choppy open water. Another example might be a less congested open water area versus a busy one.

c) After the location is determined and the Park Ranger is ready to approach, the emergency lights should be activated to establish right-of-way. This will alert the other vessel of your intentions to approach and will direct other boat traffic away from the closing vessels. For park ranger safety, it is recommended that all vessels should be approached from the stern and from the other vessel's port side if possible. This generally will allow the USACE Park Ranger maximum visibility of the operator and the contents of the vessel. Adequate fenders must be deployed on the patrol boat to prevent damage to both vessels.

d) Communications should be established with the vessel occupants to let them know that you are a USACE Park Ranger, to put his/her boat into neutral, and to keep all

hands and feet inside the vessel. The USACE patrol boat will then perform an alongside maneuver. At this point lights can be deactivated if safe to do so. However, conditions may warrant leaving them on, for reasons such as heavy boat traffic or poor visibility. Once alongside, communications are maintained and it may or may not be necessary to hold onto the other vessel depending on wave action, swimmers, or wind. For park ranger and visitor safety, the USACE vessel motor should be kept running and the vessel should remain untied from the visitor vessel. Unique circumstances could require the USACE vessel motor to be shut off during visitor contact. This will be at the discretion of the USACE vessel operator.

e) Upon completion of the vessel engagement, a simple push off of the other vessel should provide adequate room to exit the area without any vessel contact. If a citation or warning needs to be written the vessels may need to be separated while this is being accomplished.

## **Section 6.0 Enforcement**

### **6.1 General**

a) Compliance with Title 36 is the goal of the USACE Visitor Assistance Program. The enforcement tools available to a USACE Park Ranger are Visual Presence, Verbal Warnings, Written Warnings, and Collateral Citations. USACE Park Rangers enforce Title 36, Section 327, which includes references to certain U.S. Coast Guard regulations. USACE Park Rangers do not enforce state laws and regulations. However, it important for Rangers to be familiar with state laws for general awareness and for referring potential violations to local agencies if appropriate.

b) Park Rangers must be vigilant at all times while on the water. It is not uncommon to observe multiple violations at the same time, especially during periods of peak visitation or while operating in congested areas. The practice of prioritizing violations should be exercised to ensure the greatest level of visitor assistance during boat patrol. Time and experience on the water will help the park ranger determine the order in which to address violations.

c) Generally speaking, any act or conduct which is immediately impairing the safety of any individual should be addressed first. Examples might include careless, reckless, negligent operation of a vessel, or towing passengers on a tube with no PFDs. This would be a priority vessel contact over a no wake violation that does not immediately impair the safety of individuals in the area.

d) **ENFORCEMENT PRIORITIES:** Unsafe actions, negligent vessel operation, insufficient and improper use of PFDs, missing vessel safety equipment, and improper or missing navigation lights.

## 6.2 Negligent Vessel Operation, Unsafe Actions, and Restrictions

a) Various sections of Title 36, Section 327, may be used in the course of water safety boat patrols related to negligent operation and unsafe actions, including but not limited to:

Section 327.3(d) - *“No person shall operate any vessel or other watercraft in a careless, negligent, or reckless manner so as to endanger any person, property, or environmental feature.”*

Section 327.12 (c) - *“Any act or conduct by any person which interferes with, impedes or disrupts the use of the project or impairs the safety of any person is prohibited.”*

Section 327.5 (c) - *“Diving, jumping, or swinging from trees, bridges, or other structures which cross or are adjacent to project waters is prohibited.”*

Section 327.12 (a) - *“The District Commander may establish and post a schedule of visiting hours and/or restrictions on the public use of a project or portion of a project. The District Commander may close or restrict the use of a project or portion of a project when necessitated by reason of public health, public safety, maintenance, resource protection or other reasons in the public interest. Entering or using a project in a manner which is contrary to the schedule of visiting hours, closures, or restrictions is prohibited.”*

b) The following (not all inclusive) may be enforced using the appropriate sections of Title 36. Although these may serve as guidelines for determining what is considered to be unsafe or negligent, ultimately it will be the Ranger’s discretion to determine priority, severity, and/or negligence.

Additional State and Local regulations vary widely and may include such items as additional PFD wear requirements and maximum vessel capacities. It is important to know and understand these regulations so that they may be communicated to visitors when making contact. Enforcement of these requirements is incumbent upon the responsible agency. However, some violations of these requirements may fall under Title 36 regulations because they contribute to unsafe actions and/or negligent operation.

### UNSAFE ACTIONS:

- ✓ Cliff Jumping, Bridge Jumping, Tree Swinging, etc.
- ✓ Skiing or Tubing without a life jacket
- ✓ Bow riding
- ✓ Towing a skier or tuber with no spotter or rear view mirror on vessel
- ✓ Operating a PWC without wearing a life jacket
- ✓ Swimming in busy navigation channels
- ✓ Other posted restrictions



#### ❑ NEGLIGENT OPERATION

- ✓ Buoy and Navigation Violations, to include “no wake”, “boats keep out”,
- ✓ Operating vessel in close proximity and/or in a way that causes dangerous wake to swimmers, canoers, and kayakers
- ✓ Exceeding boat capacity plate to the point that it endangers passengers
- ✓ Other posted restrictions
- ✓ Operation of vessel in close proximity and/or in a way that increases chance of collision with people and boats

#### ❑ RESTRICTED AREA OPERATION

- ✓ Operating vessel in an area which is restricted due to water releases, turbulence, depth, etc.
- ✓ Operating vessel in an area which is restricted for reasons related to security
- ✓ Operating vessel that exceeds horsepower restrictions for a designated area
- ✓ Other posted restrictions

### 6.3 Federal Vessel Requirements

a) Title 36, Section 327.3 Vessels will be used in the course of water safety boat patrols when conducting vessel inspections and determining required safety equipment.

*Section 327.3(e) - “All vessels, when on project waters, shall have safety equipment, including personal flotation devices, on board in compliance with U.S. Coast Guard boating safety requirements and in compliance with boating safety laws issued and enforced by the state in which the vessel is located. Owners or operators of vessels not in compliance with this section may be requested to remove the vessel immediately from project waters until such time as items of non-compliance are corrected.”*

b) The most relevant U.S. Coast Guard vessel safety requirements (not all inclusive) are listed below. When checking for safety equipment Rangers should verify requirements by visible inspection. A tool to help complete this action is the LRD Vessel Safety Inspection Checklist. A boat operator claiming to have the correct number of life jackets on board may not realize that the life jackets need to be sized correctly, readily accessible, and intended for the proper use. Therefore, rangers shall request to see all life jackets and required throwable devices in order to verify this safety requirement.

Additional State and Local regulations vary widely and may include such items as additional PFD wear requirements and maximum vessel capacities. It is important to know and understand these regulations so that they may be communicated to visitors when making contact. Enforcement of these requirements is incumbent upon the responsible agency. However, some violations of these requirements may fall under

Title 36 regulations because they contribute to unsafe actions and/or negligent operation.

❑ 1. REGISTRATION, NUMBERING, AND CAPACITY: Registration or Documentation papers must be on board and available. The boat's registration number must be permanently attached to each side of the forward half of the boat. Characters must be plain, vertical, block style, not less than three (3) inches high, and in a color contrasting with the background. A space or hyphen must separate the letters from the numbers. The State validation sticker must be placed according to State policy (i.e. FL 1234 AB or FL-4234-AB). Federal law requires that boats less than 20 feet, and built after October 31, 1972 must have a capacity label affixed. This is the responsibility of the manufacturer. Kayaks, sailboats, inflatables, and canoes are exempt from this requirement. While Federal Regulations do not prohibit the boat operator from exceeding these capacities, state law may prohibit it.

❑ 2. PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES (PFDs): Acceptable PFDs (also known as Life Jackets) must be U.S. Coast Guard approved and in good, serviceable condition. A wearable PFD of suitable size and type (I, II, III, or V) is required for each person on the boat and/or being towed (most states require skiers and PWC riders to wear PFDs while underway). Children must have properly fitted PFDs designed for children. Wearable PFDs shall be "Readily accessible." Boats 16 feet or longer, must also have one Type IV (throwable) device, which shall be "immediately available." PFDs shall NOT be stored in unopened plastic packaging. On a vessel that is underway, children under 13 years of age must wear an appropriate U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket unless they are 1) below deck, or 2) within an enclosed cabin. If a state has established a child life jacket wear requirement that differs from the Coast Guard requirement, the state requirement will be applicable on waters subject to that state's jurisdiction. Federal law does not require PFDs on racing shells, rowing sculls and racing kayaks; state laws vary.

❑ 3. FIRE EXTINGUISHERS: Fire extinguishers are required if one of the following conditions exists: 1) Inboard engine(s); 2) Double bottom hulls not completely sealed or not completely filled with flotation materials 3) Closed living space 4) Closed stowage compartments that contain flammable materials or 5) Permanently installed fuel tanks. Recreational boats less than 26 feet, and propelled by outboard motors are NOT required to have fire extinguishers unless one or more of the conditions (2-5) listed above applies. NOTE: Fire extinguishers must be readily accessible and verified as serviceable.

❑ 4. VENTILATION: Boats with gasoline engines in closed compartments, built after 1 August 1980 must have a powered ventilation system. Those built prior to that date must have natural or powered ventilation. Boats with closed fuel tank compartments built after 1 August 1978 must meet requirements by displaying a "certificate of compliance." Boats built before that date must have either natural or powered ventilation in the fuel tank compartment.

❑ 5. BACKFIRE FLAME ARRESTER: All gasoline powered inboard/outboard or inboard motor boats must be equipped with an approved backfire flame control device.

❑ 6. SOUND PRODUCING DEVICES: To comply with Navigation Rules and for distress signaling purposes all boats must carry a sound producing device (whistle, horn, siren, etc.) capable of a 4-second blast audible for ½ mile. Boats larger than 39.4 ft. are also required to have a bell.

❑ 7. NAVIGATION LIGHTS: All boats must be able to display navigation lights between sunset and sunrise and in conditions of reduced visibility. Boats 16 feet or more in length must have properly installed, working navigation lights and an all-around anchor light capable of being lit independently from the red/green/white “running” lights.

❑ 8. KILL SWITCH: The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) implemented a new regulation requiring operators of recreational vessels, less than 26 feet in length to use an engine cut-off switch (ECOS) and associated ECOS link. The new USCG regulation is only applicable to recreational vessels. It does not apply to government-owned vessels. For USACE vessels less than 26 feet in length ER 385-1-91, Section 10.e. states, “Inspect and use the vessel engine cut-off device and safety lanyard, and attach the safety lanyard to their person (exclusive use of wireless engine cut-off devices are not authorized.

#### 6.4 Enforcement Expectations

a) The personal safety of USACE Park Rangers is **FIRST** priority. **DO NOT** take any enforcement action that will put you in danger. If you see that a visitor is extremely agitated, becoming aggressive, acting belligerent, etc., immediately move your vessel and assisting rangers/volunteers to a safe location and call local law enforcement as needed to assist with any corrective actions.

b) However, as a Corps Park Ranger, you are expected to address violations that are within your authority. Calling in a state or local water patrol agency to handle routine safety equipment violations and/or negligent/unsafe vessel operation is not acceptable. It further delays the visitor and takes the partner agency away from their valuable patrols. Therefore, it is imperative for supervisors that rangers be properly selected and trained if they are to be tasked with boat patrols.



c) Park Rangers are expected to use the full spectrum of their tools to educate visitors and gain compliance with regards to water safety rules and regulations on project waters. Unfortunately, education, visual presence and verbal warnings may not be enough to ensure compliance with regards to water safety. Remember, water safety patrols are about saving lives as opposed to paying launch fees, enforcing quiet hours, parking, littering, etc. When appropriately administered within USACE standards, writing a written warning or collateral forfeiture citation is a necessary part of the Visitor Assistance program, especially with regards to regulations involving the safety of our visitors.

d) In situations where an individual is uncooperative and refuses to accept a citation, the Park Ranger should not press the issue and remember that personnel and public safety is paramount. In such situations the Park Ranger should contact local law enforcement for assistance and/or take appropriate steps (without personal contact) to identify the alleged violator, such as recording the vehicle license plate number and description, taking photographs of the violations, and obtaining statements of witnesses.

e) It is at the discretion of the Park Ranger to decide the ultimate action to take in response to water safety violations. The following is a guide to help rangers determine the severity of violations and appropriate enforcement actions to take. The examples are not exhaustive or all inclusive. They are intended to help prioritize enforcement actions based on type of violation.

**Visual Presence** – Violations are often corrected by ranger presence without visitor contact or even any knowledge by the ranger that a violation occurred. Unless the violation was severe (perhaps PFD related), there may not be any need to speak with a visitor who complies based on Visual Presence.

EXAMPLES of instances where Visual Presence may gain compliance:

- Boaters slow down in a no wake zone once a patrol vessel is spotted.
- Cliff jumping stops when a park ranger is in the vicinity.
- Parents put children in PFDs when a patrol vessel is spotted.
- Boaters turn on navigation lights at sundown when a patrol vessel is spotted.

**Verbal Warnings** – LRD Rangers routinely issue thousands of verbal warnings. Verbal warnings are a great way to educate visitors on Corps waters and may be sufficient, assuming the visitor indicates future compliance. Verbal warnings are used for minor violations or for violations involving prohibitions when trying to inform visitors of a particular prohibition before writing any citations.

EXAMPLES of instances where it may be more appropriate to issue a verbal warning:

- Minor wake in No Wake zone
- Violations involving an education campaign such as cliff jumping prohibition.
- Minor Vessel Registration/Paperwork violations where all other safety requirements are met.
- Minor safety equipment violations, including PFDs not readily accessible or still in packaging.
- Bow riding

**Written Warning Citations** – Written warning citations are sometimes overlooked as a long term education tool when handling violations. Warnings often do not cause the same anxiety with the visitor, as does a collateral citation, but they do serve as a future reminder that compliance is expected and taken seriously by the Corps. Written warnings should be reserved for violations that are more significant in nature, but do not quite rise to the level of serious in terms of safety equipment or negligence.

EXAMPLES of instances where it may be appropriate to issue a written warning, assuming an indication of future compliance:

- Missing safety equipment such as sound producing device or fire extinguisher. Vessel still needs to be brought into compliance before voyage continues.
- Improperly sized PFD. Properly fitted PFD still needs to be worn/provided before voyage continues.
- Vessel operator forgets to turn on navigation lights, assuming when they are turned on they are in compliance.
- Significant wake in No Wake zone
- Operating vessel in restricted area. (note that a collateral citation may be more appropriate depending on severity and indication of future compliance)
- Combined total of two or more minor violations.

**Collateral Citations** – Collateral forfeiture citations are used for the most serious violations, where it is critical that visitors do not repeat the violation on their next visit to the project. Collateral citations may also be necessary when a significant violation has occurred and the visitor has indicated he/she will not comply in the future or has already received previous warnings.

EXAMPLES of instances where it is appropriate and may be necessary to issue a collateral forfeiture citation.

- Vessel missing required number of wearable PFD's for the number of passengers onboard
- Vessel missing Type IV throwable PFD

- Child under 13 not wearing PFD while vessel underway
- Restricted area violations with significant safety and /or security issues involved
- Unsafe/negligent operation of a vessel where collision nearly occurred
- Creating wake that causes property damage or wake that causes significant risk to swimmers in a designated swimming area
- Combination of minor to serious violations

**Voyage Termination** - One of the tools often overlooked by Park Rangers during the contact stage with a visitor is the Park Ranger’s authority, under Title 36, to instruct the visitor to remove the vessel immediately from project waters until such time as the items of non-compliance are corrected. Sometimes it may be necessary to terminate a voyage, including but not limited to the following conditions:

- When USACE Park Ranger is not able to get subject vessel into compliance with USCG boating safety requirements. Examples could include no navigational lighting after sunset, inadequately sized PFDs, or lack of PFDs.
- When operator of vessel refuses to comply with rules/regulations.
- When condition or capacity limitations of vessel are such that staying on the water would impair safety.
- When physical/mental condition of operator impairs his/her safety and the safety of others.
- When subject vessel/operator/passengers disturb the peace on project waters.

## **Section 7.0 Use of Volunteers**

### **7.1 Volunteer Requirements and Considerations**

USACE Volunteers are a valuable way to increase boat patrols when Corps staff may not be available to have a preferred two-person patrol. Not only does this promote the water safety program when we would otherwise not be able to patrol, but it allows us the opportunity to partner with other organizations such as the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, U.S. Power Squadrons, and other nationally recognized boating organizations, in addition to our volunteers. This option may also be used as a reward system as part of our volunteer program. For instance, as a volunteer completes a designated amount of volunteer hours, they may assist and work on the boat with a park ranger.

ER 1130-2-500 establishes the policy on accepting the services of volunteers. EP 1130-2-500 and EP 1130-2-429 establish guidance and administrative assistance for the Corps’ Volunteer Program.

- Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age and must be accompanied by a permanent Corps Ranger.

- Volunteers may not operate Corps vessels unless properly licensed/trained and given explicit permission by the District Commander or his/her authorized representative (typically the Operations Manager or Lake/Resource Manager).
- Volunteers must be able to board and disembark the patrol vessel without assistance.
- Volunteers must wear approved volunteer uniforms/insignia in accordance with the Corps volunteer program.
- Volunteers must wear a USCG approved flotation device when on the patrol vessel.
- Volunteers shall not pursue any violators.
- Volunteers shall obey all posted signs, buoys and navigation rules at all times.
- Volunteers shall observe and obey federal and state laws, municipal ordinances, rules, regulations and the policies and procedures of the Corps of Engineers.
- All Volunteers operating a radio communication device, either vessel mounted or handheld, shall strictly observe the operating procedures as set forth by the Corps of Engineers and local government entities.
- Smoking and the use of tobacco products is not permitted while working on boat patrol.
- Volunteers are responsible for the proper use, care, and upkeep of government property and equipment that is personally issued or under their immediate use or control.
- Volunteers shall remain impartial in their attitudes and actions toward visitors.
- Volunteers shall be courteous and polite in their dealings with the public at all times. They shall perform their duties quietly, avoiding harsh or profane comments, and shall always remain calm regardless of provocation to do otherwise.
- Volunteers, signed up under the Corps' Volunteer Program, will only be present to assist the boat patrol Park Rangers and will not be involved in the enforcement or education of rules, regulations or policies when interacting with members of the public.

# Appendix A: SAMPLE Pre/Post Patrol Boat Inspection Log

## PRE / POST PATROL BOAT INSPECTION LOG

PREPARED BY \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

PRE PATROL CHECK LIST	CIRCLE	POST PATROL CHECK LIST	CIRCLE
BOAT SECURED TO DOCK PROPERLY	Yes No	BOAT SECURED PROPERLY	Yes No
ANY OBVIOUS DAMAGE (If Yes – Explain)	Yes No	BOAT DAMAGED (Write Report)	Yes No
ANCHOR + CHAIN & LINE	Yes No	ENGINE & TRIM TABS UP	Yes No
FENDERS - AMOUNT	Yes No	COVER ON GPS	Yes No
LINES - TOWING LINES	Yes No	HAND HELD RADIO OFF	Yes No
BINOCCULARS	Yes No	CELL PHONE	Yes No
SPOT LIGHT & WORKING	Yes No	BOAT WASHED OR RINSED	Yes No
FIRST AID BOX & STOCKED PROPERLY	Yes No	BATTERY SWITCH OFF	Yes No
EMS FIRST AID BOX & WARMING BLANKET	Yes No	KILL SWITCH LANYARD PROPERLY	IN PLACE
DEFIBRILATOR	Yes No		
PFDs - Amount	Yes No	CIRCUIT BREAKERS OFF	Yes No
Type 4 PFDs - Amount	Yes No	VISITOR PFDs & USACE PFDs	PROPERLY STOWED
BOARDING LADDER	Yes No		
FLARE KIT & DATE CURRENT	Yes No		
BUDDY RING	Yes No		
FIRE EXTINGUISHER, FULL & CURRENT DATE	Yes No		
TOOL BOX	Yes No	ALL PAPERWORK COMPLETED	Yes No
BOAT HOOK – BRUSH - HANDLE	Yes No	SECURE SEAT/CONSOLE COVER	Yes No
CHECK FUEL and OIL Levels	Yes No	DOCK BOX LOCKED	Yes No
BATTERY SWITCH (s) ON (VM 14)	Yes No	FUEL LEVEL	
VHF RADIO / PA OPERATIONAL	Yes No	OIL LEVEL	
BOAT RADIO ON & OPERATING	Yes No	POST CHECK of FUEL & OIL	
Charger & Spare Battery (for hand held)			
911 Cell Phone & 12 Volt Charging Cable			
GPS & DEPTH SOUNDER ON & OPERATING	Yes No		
BILGE PUMP OPERATIONAL	Yes No		
ALL LIGHTS OPERATIONAL -	Yes No		
ENGINE HOURS START		ENGINE HOURS FINISH	

APPROVAL \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix B: SAMPLE Vessel Inspection Checklists

### Sample Inspection Sheet #1:

DATE	RANGER(S)						TIME OF PATROL: BOAT HRS: Begin _____ End _____			
REG # or Type of Boat	# In Boat	Reason For Contact Inspect/Violation		Safety Equipment #PFD's Fit PFD's Type 4 Fire Ext. Lights Horn				Remarks (Tow, Citation, etc.)		
1										
2										
3										
4										

DATE	RANGER(S)						TIME OF PATROL: BOAT HRS: Begin _____ End _____			
REG # or Type of Boat	# In Boat	Reason For Contact Inspect/Violation		Safety Equipment #PFD's Fit PFD's Type 4 Fire Ext. Lights Horn				Remarks (Tow, Citation, etc.)		
1										
2										
3										
4										

**Sample Inspection Sheet #2:** Below is a basic checklist that can be used for conducting boat patrol that provides a simple means for recording the type of check, registration number, and the enforcement actions taken for each requirement. V=Verbal; W=Warning; C=Collateral

**BOAT PATROL DOCK CHECK**

**REGISTRATION #** PA 1246 BD

REG             OK  V

PFD Number    OK  V  W  C

PFD Fit/Cond    OK  V  W  C

PFD Access     OK  V  W  C

PFD <13         OK  V  W  C

Type 4 (16'+)  OK  V  W  C

SOUND DEV      OK  V  W  C

FIRE EXT         OK  V  W  C

OPERATION      OK  V  W  C  NA

VOYAGE TERM Y  N

**BOAT PATROL DOCK CHECK**

**REGISTRATION #** \_\_\_\_\_

REG            OK  V  W  C

PFD Number   OK  V  W  C

PFD Fit/Cond   OK  V  W  C

PFD Access    OK  V  W  C

PFD <13        OK  V  W  C

Type 4 (16'+) OK  V  W  C

SOUND DEV     OK  V  W  C

FIRE EXT        OK  V  W  C

OPERATION     OK  V  W  C  NA

VOYAGE TERM Y  N

*SAMPLE Sheet #3: Boat Patrol Log*

Rangers: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Fuel Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Finish Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Fuel Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Pre/Post Checklist (Check each box)

	PRE	POST		PRE	POST
Boat Secured Properly			Required Equipment in place		
All doors locked/keys secured			Side scan operational		
Battery switch off			Bilge pump operational		
Kill switch and lanyard in place			Radio operational		
Lifejackets properly stowed			Fenders in place		

Water Safety Contacts: (Keep Tally Below)

Total Water Safety Contacts: \_\_\_\_\_

Water Safety Verbal Enforcement: (Keep Tally Below)

Total Verbal Enforcement Actions: \_\_\_\_\_

Water Safety Written Enforcement:

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Boater/Swimmer Assists:

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# Appendix C: Paddlecraft Supplement

## Background and purpose

Boat patrols are one of the most effective tools for promoting water safety on USACE lake projects. The primary mission of the paddlecraft patrol program is to increase paddler safety, increase interpretive outreach, promote life jacket wear, and encourage compliance with appropriate safety equipment within the paddlecraft community. On lakes and rivers, paddlecraft patrols offer flexibility to operate in shallow water and the ability to safely approach paddlers. Paddlecraft patrols also offer a powerful tool to monitor boundaries in ecologically sensitive areas and conduct USACE's environmental stewardship mission. This appendix is intended as a supplement to the current boat patrol manual outlining basic considerations and consistent procedures for adopting paddlecraft patrols at LRD projects.

Within this document, "Paddlecraft" refers to canoes and kayaks exclusively.

## Paddlecraft Markings

Per 2.2.a of the Boat Patrol Manual, paddlecraft shall be marked in such a manner to be readily identified by the public as an official USACE vessel. As noted in EP 1130-2-550, Chapter 6-7, "Vessels shall be marked appropriately, however, due to great variation in hull sizes and configurations, and the need for larger size to increase visibility on the water, sizing of legends is not herein specified." For safety and maximum visibility on the water, paddlecraft and paddles should be high visibility colors.

## Role of Rangers in Paddlecraft Patrols

Paddlecraft patrols are not a replacement for routine boat patrols. Rangers conducting paddlecraft patrols will focus their activities on water safety, interpretation, environmental stewardship activities and supporting special events for paddlers.

## Safety

Rangers shall complete a training course offered by the National Association of Safe Boating Law Administration like the Paddle Sport Safety Certification course available at no cost at <https://www.boaterexam.com/paddling/>. Before conducting paddlecraft patrols, supervisors shall evaluate ranger competency to safely operate the vessel. Rangers must demonstrate their ability to:

- Perform rapid turns (180 degree change of direction)
- Conduct self-recovery from a capsized or submerged vessel maintaining proper body positioning (head up, feet up, facing downstream) remaining with vessel while maneuvering to shore
- Avoid obstacles by maneuvering quickly using sharp turns
- Assist another paddler to recover from a capsized vessel

- Deploy throw-bag to retrieve operator and assist with vessel recovery
- Lift, load, and properly secure vessel for transport

### **Safety Gear**

Rangers shall be in proper uniform with required PPE. Paddlecraft shall be equipped with:

- Noise signaling device
- Waterproof first aid kit
- Throw bag
- Tow rope
- Waterproof flashlight, headlamp, or white all-around light
- Communication device (radio, cell phone, etc.)
- Loaner PFDs